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# Building Your Boy

How to Do It  
How Not to Do It

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Kenneth H. Wayne



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# BUILDING YOUR BOY

By the same Author

“Building Your Girl”

# Building Your Boy

HOW TO DO IT  
HOW NOT TO DO IT

BY

KENNETH H. WAYNE



SECOND EDITION

CHICAGO  
A. C. McCLURG & CO.  
1911

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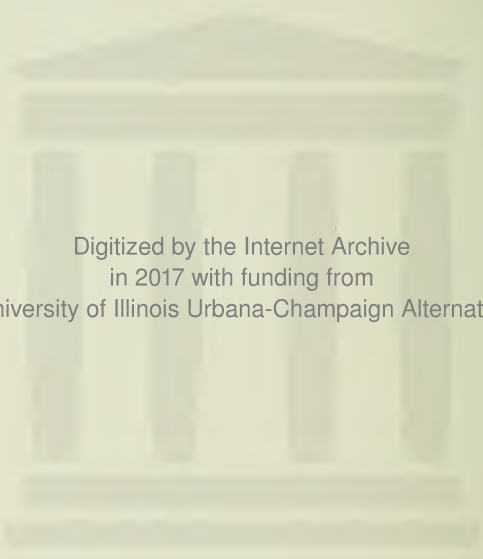
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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
EXORDIUM . . . . .	ix
I PRIDE AND RESPONSIBILITY .	1
II A GOOD SOLID BOY . . . .	7
III CONTENTED MEDIOCRITY . .	10
IV GIVE YOUR BOY A CHANCE .	13
V THE WRONG OF INATTENTION	17
VI BE THE CHUM OF YOUR BOY	23
VII GET INTERESTED IN HIS AF- FAIRS . . . . .	26
VIII CONCRETE FACTS . . . .	27
IX THE BOY'S JUDGMENT . . .	31
X PUT A BOY ON HIS HONOR .	34
XI KINDLINESS VERSUS COER- CION . . . . .	36
XII BREAKING THE WILL OF A BOY . . . . .	39

## CONTENTS—*Continued*

XIII	DON'T STRIKE YOUR BOY .	45
XIV	DO NOT SPY ON YOUR BOY	47
XV	THE BENEFIT OF A DOUBT	50
XVI	DO NOT NAG AT YOUR BOY	53
XVII	MAKE YOUR HOME ATTRAC- TIVE . . . . .	55
XVIII	THE BOY AND HIS READING	64
XIX	CHOICE OF LIFE-WORK . .	73
XX	ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL DE- VELOPMENT . . . . .	81
XXI	HAND-CRAFT AND HEAD- CRAFT . . . . .	84

## EXORDIUM

**T**HAT every sane, intelligent, and active man of affairs has the desire to perpetuate himself, to project himself beyond the limit of his years here in the world, is the teaching of our literature and our experience; the desire to perpetuate his name, his wealth, his moral characteristics, his business, and his political views and activities—in a word himself, as the personal incarnation of these belongings in life. In this we find, largely at least, an explanation of

## EXORDIUM

the common, world-wide discrimination against the girls of the family in favor of the boys.

The moral justification of this discrimination is not a matter for debate in this booklet. This is simply a statement of a fact, which seems to be sustained by a dominant public opinion, and law, which follows public opinion.

XV The fact is, that the advent of a boy baby is an epoch of family rejoicing. He is accorded a heartier welcome by the father—even by the mother—than a girl baby; and later in life he does not have to overcome

## EXORDIUM

any prejudice against his sex, but, on the contrary, there is a definite and persistent prejudice in his behalf on account of his sex.

It is not easy for the average person, perhaps, to grasp the idea that a difference in sex constitutes a bar to the enforcement of the ordinary and common sentiments which blood-relationship is supposed to represent. Yet the fact remains, and is often revealed in the distribution of property by will, the law consenting to the discrimination in favor of the sons, as against the daughters. If a man

## EXORDIUM

chooses to treat his daughters as if they were of minor consideration by diverting his property from them to his sons, either to gratify a feeling of posthumous vanity, or to make sex a test of merit, the law supports him in the discrimination.

Right or wrong, these instances are so much a part of the regular course of events, and we have become so accustomed to them, that we do not stop to think about their mischievous purport and tendency. The influence of custom and precedent is controlling; and fundamental sentiments of equity and



## EXORDIUM

impartiality, in the premises, are subordinated to the doctrine of the superiority of the male sex.

So the boy is gladly welcomed, because the father, in his narrow selfishness, finds opportunity in his boy to realize his desire to perpetuate his name, personality, and characteristic belongings. He bears the family name. He will carry it on through the years, until, in his turn he leaves it as a legacy to his own son. The girls marry, merge, and lose it.

As the boy advances in years, he is assisted and stimulated in every

## EXORDIUM

way. Not only his family, but the world at large, affords ample scope for the assertion of all his possibilities and powers, and liberal rewards follow his endeavors. If he shows an aptitude for public and political service, society hastens to open the path for him to the highest honors.

# Building Your Boy

## I

### PRIDE AND RESPONSIBILITY

**A**S a father, you cannot be too proud of the fact that you have a Boy in your home; that he is your Boy; that he is to share in the intimacies and private associations of your home; that amid these associations and in the atmosphere of your home, this Boy is to grow and develop, physically, mentally, morally. It is to be his play and study ground for some years.

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

Nor can you too deeply feel the responsibility of your fatherhood. That along with your other affairs of life, you are going to build, and, in large measure equip, a human being for life-work, a Boy, then a young man. It may be pardonable that you purpose and plan to make him another You. That is for your decision.

Consciously and unconsciously, you will give this Boy physical, mental, and moral shape. From you, as his father, the Boy will take his first ideas in manliness, in honor and integrity, in morals, in

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

politics, in social life, in religion. You cannot shift this responsibility; nor should you want to do it. Your pride in him will protest against it. He is your Boy, and you are his pattern Man. After a while he will know other men, but now, in his formative period, you are his model man.

Every day you may take your Boy by the hand and heart, and with fatherly wisdom and discernment and kindness, train and educate and equip him, to meet successfully the test of the hour when, as a man, he enters real life

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

and the world's work. Therein lies the foundation of all true Boy-building: pride and responsibility. His safe-conduct in growth and development amid the dangers that lie ambushed along the pathway of every Boy, will depend upon the character of your interest in him, the expenditure of your care, and the wisdom that is yours, through experience out in the world.

While there is no occasion for the hysterical and frenzied clamorings of the average reformer—which give scant credit to the good

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

and trustworthy qualities of the average Boy—there is opportunity enough for the exercise of these finer qualities of the father, in a kindly, beneficent, and benignant guidance of his Boy, most of which will be in the home intimacies and associations.

With his Boy, every father will have a different, and his own task. Different problems will present themselves, but there is a common term of specifications applicable in all cases of Boy-building. They are offered in these pages. It was Mr. Spencer who said:

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

“By no method of alchemy can we get golden conduct out of leaden instincts; but instincts can be changed; fresh grafts can be introduced upon the stock; the whole tree can be trained in a new direction.”

In Boy-building, and with the ability and power in the father's hands, nothing should be left to chance or to possible adventitious circumstances.



## II

### A GOOD SOLID BOY

**T**AKE it for granted that you have a good, solid boy, without any of the intensities. If so, be thankful. It is these intensities, these keen points, that make mischief. We should despise them. The world has had enough of them, and to spare. More than one Socrates would have made wreck and ruin of Athens. More than one Emerson would have destroyed the literary prestige of Boston. It is a blunder to wish that the world

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

might have more Shakespeares. One was enough. Providence did not duplicate Washington. A second might have become a pilot on an oyster dredge.

Be glad that your Boy is not a genius,—cadaverous at twenty, bony at fifteen, wearing spectacles at twelve, the pride of the village at ten. Set apart for the ministry, the genius generally bolts and goes into law or politics, or both. In your soul be thankful that your Boy is not an intensity of this kind. Be glad that he is a mediocre fellow; that he is handsome

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

in body, strapping like an Absalom; handsome in mind, not a whit more; that he is ordinarily clever; rotund as a Johnsonian sentence; not specially vicious; not abnormally good; with a wholesome look, bright eye, and a magnetic atmosphere.

All this will give him a chance for morals. By morals, we mean a healthy, wholesome way of looking at things of real life. You can afford to be thankful for that sort of material with which to Build a Boy.

### III

#### CONTENTED MEDIOCRITY

**M**EDIOCRITY has its compensations on all sides. Teach that to your boy. The hour when it becomes clear to a youngster that his life is, in all probability, to move along the pavement of mediocrity, may be full of danger, or it may be full of hope. If he is wise and courageous enough to compromise with the gilded gewgaws and aspirations of the average baccalaureate, and to accept the hard-hammered promises of an in-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

tensely practical world, well and good. That is, if he can make up his mind to get along without either of the different sorts of inspiration which come to men who are better off, and to men who are worse off than he is, he is tolerably safe. Let him be satisfied with being neither a five-talent man nor a one-talent man, but a middle man, who is neither very much nor very little. That is a good lesson to teach your Boy. And it is especially pertinent in these days of "honor men," medals, degrees, and so many of those

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

brilliant, imaginative, and word-decorated gang-planks, over which college presidents are wont to send graduates from their ships of learning to the shore of a very matter-of-fact and practical world.

## IV

### GIVE YOUR BOY A CHANCE

**I**F you are fortunate enough to have an all-round Boy, say in his middle 'teens, then give the little fellow a chance. By chance is meant a great deal more than the commonly acted-out notion that a boy is a sort of cipher with the rim rubbed off all the way round, and that any old thing in the way of treatment—just any haphazard, indifferent attention and training—will do for him. Of course, there is neither decent treatment nor

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

training in it, and yet it is about what is really accorded to more than half our boys, even in homes where the persons claim to be civilized and eminently respectable, cultured, and Christianized. The marvel is that so many of these boys grow up into clean, wholesome men. It would be a weighty addition to philosophy and science to know why they succeed as they do.

No man who owns a Boy could made a greater blunder than to take that view of him, unless he looks at his Boy as a kind of croquet ball that must be forced through certain



## BUILDING YOUR BOY

wickets by the insistent use of the mallet of authority, which expresses itself in blows, dwelling on faults, iteration of "don'ts" and scolds and frets, and the belittling of everything the small fellow does or tries to do. When we know that that is the curriculum in tens of thousands of homes, the surprise is that there are so many splendid Boys.

Some fathers assume that attitude so persistently that the Boy comes to believe, without knowing the philosophy in relation to it, that his defects have been branded deeply into his nature, and that it

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

is not worth while for him to try to get rid of them. The father who assumes that sort of an attitude toward his Boy doesn't deserve to have a Boy. As a parent, he is a misfit. He isn't even a decent heathen. He belongs to that class of men who are always condemning Boys for getting away from home at the earliest possible legal moment, or before, and who stay away. No sane man can blame the Boys.

## V

### THE WRONG OF INATTENTION

**A**S bad as either of these is the inattention of the father who is always "too busy" with his affairs, his club, his newspaper, or his theatre to listen to, or to give any time to his Boy; "too busy" to have a chat with him; "too busy" to take any interest in his Boy's affairs; "too busy" to visit the schoolroom of his Boy on examination day, to watch his Boy play ball now and then, to go to the fair or the zoo or the circus with his

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

Boy, to go swimming or fishing with him.

Every father ought to look upon these intimate associations with his Boy as among the greatest privileges of fatherhood, and to look upon their neglect as being fraught with evil consequences. The Boy is sensitive on this point. He desires above all things the companionship and interest of his father. It stimulates and inspires him to do the best he can. A word from his father, even the presence and manifested interest of his father, will give the Boy

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

pleasure and encouragement. If the father neglects these opportunities of a close and helpful association with his Boy, and shows no interest, the Boy feels it keenly, more keenly than most of us imagine. He grows discouraged, indifferent, and careless, not only as to his achievements in his studies, but as to his associations.

There are thousands of men, gray of hair, and of middle age, who would give half their possessions to be able to go back and correct the error of the "too busy" father, and share these simple

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

things with their Boys the neglect of which has cost them pain and sorrow. The regret has come too late.

The "too busy" of the father has cost many a Boy heartache and disappointment; has made a wide breach between father and son; has lost the father many an opportunity of being morally helpful to his Boy. It has sent many a Boy into the "far country" of the street and lounging places of town and city, where he has had put into the structure of his character materials in the way of evil habits which

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

have laid his life in wreck and ruin, — materials which the “too busy” father would now be glad enough to get out at any cost. His “too busy” has wedged and mortised them in. These evil habits are more “catching” than the most contagious disease, more tenacious. One evil habit may be, often is, the source of all the subsequent ruin of manhood. It is the duty of the father to stand by his Boy in the closest association, until he is sure that the character of the Boy is sufficiently well formed to resist the encroachments of evil.

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

At a very early age the father should impart to his Boy that wise instruction which may forestall the enemy of moral cleanliness and purity. To keep the Boy clean and pure and wholesome should be the strife of the father. Not to do it is to be criminally negligent.



## VI

### BE THE CHUM OF YOUR BOY

**A**S a father, chum with your Boy. No father should ever grow too old or too dignified to be the intimate companion, the real chum, of his boy. He makes the mistake of his life when he does not do it.

Win the confidence of your Boy, every whit of it. Win his affection, his highest esteem. It will be a sad, well-nigh tragic break in the life of a Boy when, for any reason, the father ceases to be to him

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

the best and finest man in the world. To win and keep the confidence of his Boy is the privilege and duty of the father; the earlier in life it comes to the father, the better.

A Boy wants company and companionship; he wants a confidant. All human nature is gregarious. The human nature of your Boy is no exception. No one is so naturally the companion and confidant of the Boy as the father. Be his chum. Do not, as you value his future good and your own peace of conscience, by your "too busy" or

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

your indifference in his boyish interests, send him elsewhere for his intimate associations and companionships.

## VII

### GET INTERESTED IN HIS AFFAIRS

**G**ET interested in what he regards as the chief affairs of his boyish life. It will pay you, in more ways than one. You will discover that it is a mutual give and take. Your Boy gets the benefit of your knowledge and mature experience, which he will appreciate as fine and great because you are his father, and you will get some of his youngness into you and find that it helps mightily. The more of it you get, the less the years count in your life.

## VIII

### CONCRETE FACTS

**S**IMPLY because concrete facts are of worth here, the author gives a bit of his own experience. Experience is what we go through; what goes through us. It taught me that, while at first it was not easy to get down to my Boy's level, it would have been a wretched mistake not to persist in it to accomplishment, and that it would also have been a mistake to try to lift my Boy and his belongings and interests to my level.

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

And so, without any inklings of either the patronizing spirit or superior knowledge, I knuckled down to kites, pet rabbits, woodchuck-hunting, Indian wigwams, baseball, marbles, figure-fours, swimming, skating, reading, school work—in a word, the whole A B C of boyish interests and delights.

Looking back at it through a dozen years or more, two things in that experience stand out clearly; it did me good all round, and it gave me my Boy, as fully as is possible for a father to have his Boy,—gave me his confidence, his affection,

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

his esteem. The memory of it is pleasant, and will have no dying, nor here, nor beyond the crossing.

Fathers who try it will find that it pays, in the coinages of what is richest in life, to plan a late afternoon or an evening at home or afield with the Boy—with him and for him, to be his alone. If there is sacrifice in it, and the Boy knows it, so much the better.

Play games with him, even rollicking ones; have quiet talks with him about his affairs; get at his heart-thinkings; read with him; tell him stories—all this, rather than

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

go so often to the club, the theatre, or social functions. Such hours with your Boy make bright spots and incidents in his life,—happy events, filled with untellable influences for good. Somewhere in his life, fronting temptation, the memory of these hours will prove morally bracing and saving. We may well pity the Boy whose younger years have had no comradeship with father. It is the inalienable right of your Boy, and any act or circumstance that deprives him of it is a violation of justice and equity, a lamentable mistake of fatherhood.



## IX

### THE BOY'S JUDGMENT

**D**O not ignore the fact of your Boy's judgment. Boys in their 'teens have a keenness and accuracy of judgment for which they get scant credit. A boy of this age knows intuitively whether his confidence is wanted, and where to place it. He knows, too, whether interest in him and his affairs is genuine or not. A Boy has sharp eyes and detects shams at a glance. Any namby-pamby make-believe, and half-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

hearted interest is soon detected by a Boy.

First of all, the Boy wants to give his full confidence to his father; he wants to place it there. The father should get it and hold it. The time in which a father has a helpful, shaping influence with his Boy is limited. It is shorter than many of us realize. Indeed, your Boy may have reached confirmed tendencies before you have thought about creating them, before you begin to perform your duty in this direction. The critically formative period in your Boy's

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

life is, perhaps, between twelve and sixteen years of age. It is then that the tendencies toward shaping character are getting well settled in their moulds. In these years the father should be especially companionable with and watchful of his Boy. It is the character crisis point in the Boy's life.

## X

### PUT A BOY ON HIS HONOR

**A**S far as possible—and the possibilities are much greater than we commonly suppose—a father should put a Boy on his honor. At an early age a Boy has the sense of honor, knows what honorable conduct is and what it means. The sense of right and wrong is instinctive in all humanity. Give the Boy a chance, as far as possible, to make his own settlement of these questions of right and wrong in conduct.

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

Every Boy likes to be trusted. Above all, he wants his father to trust him, to believe in him, to trust him in word and act, to believe that he will do right.

Somebody asked the great actor, Joseph Jefferson, what he was doing for his children in the way of training. He replied: "I am training them to fish, to play fair, and to tell the truth; I trust them." Not in one case in a hundred will a Boy who is put on his honor disappoint his father. Let the Boy know that you believe in his honor, that his word is good with you.

## XI

### KINDLINESS VERSUS COERCION

X **K**INDNESS is the highest human excellence; and nowhere is it more applicable, more positive in value, and more certain of good results, than in the building of a Boy. Kindness in treatment will touch and temper the better qualities in him, and induce obedience; coercion will not. You cannot make men moral by law, nor can children be compelled to be good.

In your Boy-building, there should be no compulsion, no scold-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

ing, no nagging. There should be no attempt to drive the Boy, than whom nothing in the world is more stubborn when antagonized by injustice and inconsiderateness, nothing more amenable to fairness. In Boy-building kindliness is instinct with success, because instinct with the qualities of justice, sympathy, and helpfulness. The father who is kind respects his Boy, honors him, treats him with the highest consideration, is tender and humane toward his Boy.

Your Boy is yours, now, in his 'teens, and if you fulfil this law of

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

kindness, he will be yours later in life. By this treatment you may influence and control his life long after he has gone out of his home. The Boy who has a kind, close, companionable confidant in his father, and finds him genuinely interested in what concerns him as a Boy, will not in after-life, as a man, yield easily, if at all, to the temptation of mean and contemptible things.



## XII

### BREAKING THE WILL OF A BOY

X COERCION, or what is termed “breaking the will” of a Boy, is cruel, inhuman, and unmanly; a relic of the most ignorant and brutal paganism in the annals of the race. No father has the right under any circumstances to attempt the breaking the will of his Boy. Fathers who do try this sort of thing contend that they find warrant for the brutality (and it is brutality) in the Scriptures. They will glibly quote Deu-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

teronomy XXI, and the Proverbs. "Train up a child [by coercion] in the way he should go [according to this father's idea], and when he is old he will not depart from it."

The counsel of Solomon should be read as he uttered it: "Train up a child according to his way [his temperament], and even when he is old, he will not depart from it." The meaning is clear. The Boy's temperament and peculiarities, the needs of his nature in the individual sense, should be taken into account and carefully considered. His training should be adapted especially to these, so that

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

he is helped into his proper way, rather than into any way picked out for him by a strong-willed father. Solomon's injunction is utterly opposed to this "will-breaking." The author of the Proverbs was a wise man, and it is n't even thinkable that he would advocate will-breaking in children.

Unable to interpret intelligently the Scriptures, and actuated by selfish and unenlightened motives, these fathers make the blunder. Will-training is an important part of the Building of a Boy, but will-breaking has no part or place in it. It is noteworthy that the mother

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

always protests against it. Her intuition is far superior to this man's judgment. The father who sets out on a campaign of coercion and will-breaking in the training of his Boy is totally ignorant of the first principles of parental relationship.

A broken will is a broken bow. Will is the power of choice. A Boy is endowed with it. It is God-implanted. There can be no choice when, under coercion, there is but one possible course to pursue. To do under compulsion and force is not to choose.

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

No sane man claims that the will of a Boy should be lawless, or that he should scout and trample upon home authority. Nor, if there is kind, persuasive training will it be. It is common information that wholly unrestrained recklessness in youth makes criminals, but if the statistics in criminology and the records of our police courts are worth anything as evidence, they prove absolutely that more boys and girls go wrong because of unfair, unjust, and brutal treatment in the home, than from any other cause. That is the belief of every

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

chief of police in this country. To crush out and break the will of a Boy, to wound his spirit in his callow and formative years, by cruel, coercive methods, is to destroy the groundwork of manhood and life. The divine plan is, that control and training shall be saturated with the grace of kindness and suffused with interest and persuasion. If some correction is necessary to exact obedience, give your Boy a reason for it, and deprive him of some coveted pleasure, rather than resort to corporal methods.

### XIII

#### DON'T STRIKE YOUR BOY

**N**O matter what the offence, don't strike your Boy, with hand or fist. A father should be ashamed to strike his Boy. No man worthy of fatherhood will do it. It is both brutal and cowardly in any father. If he is the average Boy, a blow from his father injures his self-respect and suddenly interrupts, if it does not break, the tender threads of affection that should bind a Boy to his father. In most of these cases of physical

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

✓ punishment the Boy feels that his father inflicts it because he is physically able to do it. No corporal punishment in the home ought to be the rule. The grace of kindness and persuasion is far more effective. Every human being is susceptible to kindness. That, and a judicious exercise of real fatherliness, will accomplish the desirable ends.



## XIV

### DO NOT SPY ON YOUR BOY

**W**HATEVER else you may do, do not play the spy on your Boy. That is a contemptible stoop in a father. If you wanted to destroy your Boy's confidence in you and shatter his affection and esteem for you, you could not find a better way to do it. It is beneath the dignity of a father. If you attempt it, he will find it out, and when he does, so far as your influence for his good is concerned,

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

you have lost your Boy. You cannot adopt any course of conduct toward your Boy that will so quickly, so thoroughly, and so everlastingly drive you out of his life. Nothing you can do, no apology you can make, will repair the injury or reinstate you in his affection and esteem. He will live with you, technically obey you; but the fact that you have refused to trust him, and have stooped to spy on him, is an evidence of your disbelief in him, and will always remain a rankling wound in his

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

heart. He will give you distrust for distrust, and withhold his confidence. The embarrassment of the situation will be very painful to you.

## XV

### THE BENEFIT OF A DOUBT

**I**F occasion arise where you, as a father, think you have a case involving the integrity of your Boy, the utmost caution and tact should be used. Sift it to the bottom before you either speak to him or act. His whole future, and your peace of mind, may pivot on this incident. Your Boy is entitled to the benefit of any doubt. Don't attempt any "third degree" device. Get incontrovertible proof of the guilt of your Boy before you

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

accuse him; accept nothing less. If it is against him, let him tell his story of the affair. Do not question him while he tells it. Sympathetically listen. Weigh all the circumstances. If he has done wrong on the spur of the moment, impulsively, without viciousness, while you may not condone the act, you can be fair and considerate.

If he is penitent, let him find forgiveness and no change in your confidence in him. Let him be altogether conscious of this. It will deepen his penitence. That he has caused you sorrow and pain

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

is enough. After the incident is closed, never let him have occasion to feel that you are keeping it against him. Like the reasonable being that he is, he will not do the wrong again. If there is the shadow of a doubt as to his guilt, give the Boy the benefit of that doubt.

## XVI

### DO NOT NAG AT YOUR BOY

**D**O not nag at your Boy. If he breaks or tears, do not display a nagging, scolding, fretting spirit. If he is a wide-awake, fun-loving Boy, do not crucify his jubilant spirit. Do not snap him up with any sharp, brusque, and harsh reprimand. He is just a Boy, and *your* Boy. He has all the exuberance of a wild animal. If he expresses an opinion, do not cut him out with some exclamation that has the tone of displeasure in

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

it. Hear him; and if he is right, commend him. If he is wrong, then kindly set him right. He takes himself seriously as a Boy.

Do not call his attention to the model Boy next door, by the way of comparison, to the discredit of himself. It is a common and a great mistake which fathers make. Quite often, the Boy next door is an insufferable prig, who is about as animated as a cigar-store Indian, and, as a model of primness and virtue, is given to calling attention to his own goodness. No Boy profits by these extraordinary models.



## XVII

### MAKE YOUR HOME ATTRACTIVE

**M**AKE the home a delightful place for your Boy. Make its surroundings and its atmosphere congenial and appealingly pleasant. You can make it so much this that your Boy will not care to spend his leisure hours elsewhere. Sometimes it is the monotony of home life of which the Boy may weary. Among adults, monotony creates worry and discontent. Have something new and fresh and interesting with

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

which to entertain your Boy and contribute to his love of home.

Among other things, give him a room that he can refer to as his own, where he can keep and display his own boyish belongings. Not away off in the top of the house,—maybe in the unceiled story,—where the little fellow swelters through the summer and shivers through the winter nights, a room all devoid of comfort and attractiveness. Every Boy has the instinct of fitness and decency, with some sense of beauty, and everything about this average up-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

stairs room outrages and insults these instincts. It is usually given to him in the wretched notion that anything will do for a Boy.

Your Boy is entitled to something better than this. Give him a room in a better part of the house. Have it tastefully arranged, with some good story telling pictures on the walls to greet his morning eyes; books and fancy things on the table. Give it an air of comfort and attractiveness. Let him feel the pride of ownership; let him recognize your love and interest in all that it contains.

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

Give him the privilege of having boy companions visit him there. Visit with him yourself, not only when he may be sick, but when he is well. Take an interest in what he has there as his own. Add something to his treasures now and then. These visits offer rare opportunities for getting hold of the deepest affections of your Boy.

Such a room as that, and the daily care of it, will do more to create in your Boy contentment and a love of home, and stimulate his sense of order and neatness, and make him morally stronger in hours of

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

temptation, than almost anything else you can do for him. It will, as well, awaken within him the desire to please you by obedience and good conduct. In this you are enacting one of the finest maxims in our speech: "Starve the evil in a man by feeding the good there is in him."

All this is within the reach and means of every father who has a home. The lack of it is not so much a matter of means as it is of thoughtlessness and want of consideration.

An attractive home, to which a

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

Boy will go with delight, will greatly reduce the possibilities of contamination by contact with evil associations which lie await outside. And these evil associations will lie there always, and await always. Your Boy must meet them. He is not an immune. Nothing you can do will give your Boy immunity. What you can do, by teaching and training and the inculcation of the principles of the virtues and manliness, is to preempt the fertile soil of his young mind, laying the foundations for moral cleanliness, honor, self-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

respect, and mental integrity, strengthening and equipping him for the ordeal through which he must inevitably pass on his way up in years.

So long, and so far as possible, prevent contact with associations that are evil. As a father, you ought to know a good deal about the character of the associates of your Boy, the boys he likes and has chosen as companions. You cannot know them as intimately as you know your Boy, but you can know enough for a decision as to their fitness or unfitness as com-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

panions for your Boy; and it is dereliction on your part not to know.

And places, you should know, as well as Boys. A father will find it a good rule to get firmly fixed in the mind and heart of his Boy never to go into doubtful places; and not only places that are known to be doubtful, but places that are not known to be safe. This is a rule that, obeyed, will be helpful in guarding your Boy against contaminations of evil.

If a Boy has such a home, and such a room in it, he will find there



## BUILDING YOUR BOY

alluring occupations for time and mind. A true fatherly interest will find a way to make these home and room occupations interesting and entertaining to his Boy. When they are interesting, they are absorbing and engaging to the mind as well as the body.

## XVIII

### THE BOY AND HIS READING

**R**EADING is one of the chief delights of your Boy, and because it is, it is one of the most vitally important factors in Boy-building, and one about which you, as his father, cannot be too much concerned. We may well give the epigram, "As a man thinketh, so is he," a new direction: "As a Boy readeth, so is he," largely. Nor is there any occasion here for the deliriousness and fright so often assumed by the professional alarm-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

ist. All that is necessary is the expenditure of common sense and intelligent judgment on the part of the father.

It is assumed that a father may not wholly know the character of the associates and chosen companions of his Boy, but he can know altogether the character of his Boy's companions whom he meets and talks with in books. And he ought to know them and the influence they are to exert upon the mind and heart of his Boy. There should be restriction by the father as to the quality and quantity of read-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

ing matter; a fair and just supervision of books. There is a lavish provision in our public libraries for the free gratification of the reading taste. The right and usefulness of that provision ought to be a question to be settled largely by the father. Fiction will always be a large part of your Boy's reading; and your duty is to see that his stories contain mental and moral nutrition, and that the imagination, as the most creative element in your Boy's mind, be fed bountifully in true and harmless and beautiful ways. Many of our ablest and most

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

accomplished modern writers have contributed to the stock of juvenile literature. This fact assures the issuance of entertaining and interesting, as well as helpful, books for the Boy, which will aid the father in his supervision and selection of reading matter. The father ought to have the best and widest knowledge possible in respect to desirable books and papers for his Boy. Nothing that is likely to lead to a perverted imagination, or false views of life, should be allowed.

Books and papers of this last character are scattered broadcast

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

in our land. As well, there is an ample supply of the other kind, where splendid stories are attractively told; where the language is good and pure, the descriptions of character and of places are vivid, and the narratives and conversations themselves are invested with all the glamour and brightness which each one of our best authors knows how to throw about his subject. In such books there is a deep undercurrent of good teaching, which the young reader is well-nigh certain to find and appropriate. The importance of

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

style in a book for a Boy can hardly be overestimated. It creates in him a love of fine diction and cultivates good taste. It may be asserted that one great reason which unconsciously causes a bright lad to enjoy his story-book is the beauty of the diction.

One of the first conditions of a good book, for a Boy, is that it should not be written contemptuously, with the notion that any nonsense and a slovenly use of language will do for the purpose, or with the patronizing air of one who writes down rather than up to

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

the level of a Boy's comprehension. The point of view from which a bright Boy looks into literature and the world is not necessarily a lower one than that of the author. Different, no doubt; but the difference is one of kind rather than of degree.

Books for your Boy should awaken his curiosity, feed his fancy and imagination, stimulate his mental and moral qualities, entertain and interest him, provide him with ideals of robust manliness, and not in any sense pander to viciousness. Such books and papers are plenti-



## BUILDING YOUR BOY

ful. Give the Boy romance, but the best there is; that which gives his mind a love of the great and the wholesome; that which carries his thoughts out from himself, stirs his observant and reflective faculties. Interlard this with reading that goes hand in hand with his school work; the one helps the other. Of course, no father wants his Boy's mind fed on the trashy stuff that lies within the covers of the average five-cent novel. A little care and kindly advice will soon make it out of the question for the Boy to enjoy a book of

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

questionable morality. Books that increase the knowledge of the Boy, that add to his skill or arouse his enthusiasm, that make him appreciative of what is good and true, and that render him more resolute to follow what is best and highest, are the books you should put into his hands.

## XIX

### CHOICE OF LIFE-WORK

**T**HEN there comes the question of the life-work of your Boy. It is here that some of the greatest blunders of parents are made. These blunders are needless because heedless.

The nature of the Boy has decided, or is deciding, the place in life that he can fill with the greatest satisfaction to himself and others. The natural bent toward this or that occupation is in the Boy. As his father, it is your busi-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

ness to find that bent in his early life. When you have found it, foster it in every legitimate way. Never oppose it by trying to make something else of him.

Nature has put within your Boy the embryonic qualities of the engineer, the carpenter, the blacksmith, the physician, the lawyer, the merchant, the preacher, the teacher, the farmer—some one of the many occupations of men in life. These qualities you are to discover and aid in their realization. They may run athwart your plans for him, and counter your dearest wishes; but if you are wise, and have gar-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

nered anything worth while out of your experience in the world, you will not attempt to force your Boy into some sphere of life-work for which it is apparent he has no natural bent, no aptitude, no earnest desire or thought or enthusiasm.

You may sincerely desire a reproduction of yourself in your Boy, so far as occupation is concerned, a desire to make him another *you*; and happy are you if nature in the Boy is with you in it. But the blunder of all blunders will be the effort to make him a merchant, or a lawyer, or a preacher, if nature

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

has outfitted him for a farmer, a mechanic, or an artist.

Study his originality, his initiative. Recognize the personal peculiarities of your Boy in these matters, then cheerfully guide and aid his development along his own leanings.

If you do not, and you push him or persuade him into some other place, perchance because it anguishes your soul to see the smut of the shop on him, you will see him as a square man in a round hole, or a round man in a square hole—a misfit for life, a sadly pa-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

thetic, spoiled life. In the wretchedness of dissatisfied existence, the fret and chafing of it, in its failure of success, your Boy will pay the penalty of your heedless, needless blunder of trying to defeat a natural law. These things have their price, and the price must be paid.

The world is full of these pathetic misfits—lawyers who should have been carpenters, and carpenters who should have been lawyers or doctors; ministers who should have been merchants, and merchants who should have gone into the pulpit; and so on, through the long list.

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

If your boy has a natural taste and aptitude for music, do not spoil a successful career in this direction by trying to make him drop it for the tools of a mechanic. It is safer, and far more sane, to let him follow his ambition. Encourage it. If the Boy would rather play with tools than eat, stand by him. Pitch your own notions to the winds, and help him develop his individuality in its own natural direction. The bent of your Boy will reveal itself in one way or another.

My own Boy wanted one of two things, and the desire came out in a



## BUILDING YOUR BOY

queer way. Getting off a train and walking past the powerful locomotive behind which we had been travelling swiftly, my Boy pulled at my arm and pointed to the cab of the engine, saying: "Up there is where I want to be, papa"; then he added, "or behind the guns in the navy."

I had altogether different plans and desires for my Boy's future, but thence on, I dismissed them, never mentioned them to him, and willingly helped him to a realization of his desire. I am glad that I did, for he is not a misfit, and has made good.

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

History is replete with cases where the father has attempted to take a Boy away from nature and make a misfit of him, and nature has always won out. There were Webster, and Adams, and Benjamin West, and Michael Angelo, and Bach, and Handel, and Arkwright, and Galileo, and Watts, and A. T. Stewart, and numberless others, whose fathers made a losing fight. It is wise for you to find out which way nature is leading your Boy in the matter of life-work, then cheerfully acquiesce, and help the Boy on his way.

## XX

### ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

**Q**UITE always a Boy is physically active, athletic, brimful of physical unrest. But he uses it in chunks, with no system or regularity or purpose in its expenditure. This you are to teach him. Teach him the value of health and a fine physical condition. Teach him that a well man is a king among men. Men like to look at him; women admire him; children confide in him. Teach your Boy the intimate relations of mental, moral, and physical

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

health; how they hang together, grow together, are dependent on each other. Teach him how to conserve physical strength, and how to develop it in a rational, sane way; how to build up any weak points that he may have, until his physique is symmetrical and serviceable. Point out the habits that neutralize and weaken his physical nature. Do not minimize these habits; better set his thoughts toward the maximum of their evil. Show him this in the object lessons of afflicted and subnormal men and boys. Develop a sense of responsi-

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

bility in him in this matter of the physical nature. Point out the difference between making a fad of physical training, and a sane and systematic development.

## XXI

### HAND-CRAFT AND HEAD-CRAFT

**G**IVE your Boy all the educational training of the book-and-school kind you can, even adding to the three R's, the dear old classical kind. Give him Greek and Latin and all the rest of the flowers of the Hymettian field, if you will, but, somehow, give him training in the field of manual work—hand-craft. There is a steadily increasing demand in the business life of this country for brains coupled with technical skill.

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

The advertising columns of your daily newspaper make this very clear. Even if your Boy goes into the professional field, a knowledge of and experience with hand-craft will prove of positive benefit to him.

In the absence of the old-while apprenticeship, the only alternative is to give him tools and the lessons from the correspondence or the technical schools. These are developing and practical. The Boy's best intelligence, and that natural bent which manifests itself at an early age and which is

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

nature's way of showing in what direction he is best calculated to work, will turn him to a given occupation and decide that he can follow it to advantage.

You may have a Boy who has grown tired of school. This may be because of his slow progress or of some inherent weakness. He has tired of the uphill work; the fatigue of study is genuine with him. He has lost his interest. He is fifteen or sixteen and has his eye on some handicraft occupation. He longs to begin it as his life-work. If he is a thought-



## BUILDING YOUR BOY

ful Boy, he is probably right about leaving school. If, after a thorough investigation and study of the situation, these facts are made clear, your duty is plain: let him go into the shop or store, and bid him Godspeed. To keep him in school, of which he is tired, and where he makes no reasonable progress, is an unwise thing to do. It invites trouble and disaster.

Covet for your Boy the best gifts, then see to it that he has the freest choice and opportunity to make the most and the best of his life.

Let everything you do for your

## BUILDING YOUR BOY

Boy invite his affection and confidence; let it beckon his aspirations for what is highest and best, and awaken true ambition. So train and so build him that his character will be not only symmetrical, but a symphony of all the virtues which make for true success. It is a great privilege.

THE END

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